An Acte agaynst offenders of preachers, and other ministers of the Churche.

FOrasmuche as it is most necessary in euery christian comon welth to prouide, that tranquillitie and peace may be preserued and continued amonges the people, and speciallye in holye Churche in the time of diuine seruice and administration of the Sacramentes, and Sacramentalles, as before thys time it hath bene accustomed in holy Churche within this realme. and that al thinges beyng contrary therunto, or that are or maye be in disturbaunce th[illegible] t be eschewed and auoyded, and remedy therfore in due tyme prouided, aswell for the p[illegible]on of the Quenes hyghnes peace, as for an vniuer sall quietnes and ordre to be vsed within this realme.

Be it therfore enacted by the Quene our Soueraygne Lady, the Lordes, spirituall and temporall, and commons in this present parliament assembled, and by the aucthoritie of the same, that yf any person or persons of their owne power and aucthoritye, at any time or times, after the .xx. day of December next commyng, do or shal willingly, and of purpose, by open and ouert worde, facte, acte, or dede, maliciously or contemptuously molest, lette, disturbe, vexe, or trouble, or by any other vnlawfull wayes, or meanes, disquiete, or misuse any preacher or preachers, that nowe is, or that at anye tyme or tymes hereafter shalbe licensed, allowed, or aucthorised to preache by the Quenes hyghnes, or by any Archebishop, or Bishop of this realme, or by any other lawful ordinary, or by any of the vniuersities of Oxforde and Cambrige, or otherwise lawfullye aucthorised or charged by reason of his, or their cure, benefice, or other spirituall promocion or charge, in anye of his, or their open sermon, preachyng, or collacion, that he or they shall make, declare, preache, or pronounce in any Churche, chappell, Churcheyard, or in any other place or places, vsed, frequented, or appoynted, or that hereafter shalbe vsed or appoynted to be preached in.

Or yf any person, or persons after the sayde .xx. day of December next commynge, shall maliciously, willingly, or of purpose, molest, lette, disturbe, vexe, disquiete, or otherwise trouble anye person, vicar, paryshe priest, or curate, or any lawfull priest, prepayring, saying, doing, singyng, ministrynge, or celebratyng the Masse, or other suche diuine seruice, Sacramentes, or Sacramentalles, as was mooste commonly frequented and vsed in the laste yeare of the raygne of the late Soueraygne Lorde kinge Henry theight, or that at any tyme hereafter shalbe allowed, set forth, or aucthorised by the Quenes Maiestie.

Or yf any person or persons at any time or times, after the sayde .xx. daye of December, shall contemptuously, vnlawfully, or maliciously of their owne power or aucthoritie, pul downe, deface spoyle, abuse, breake, or otherwise vnreuerently handle, or ordre the mooste blessed comfortable &, holy Sacrament of the body and bloude of our Sauiour Jesus Christ, comonly called the Sacrament of the Alter, beyng, or that shalbe in any Churche or Chappell, or in anye other decente place, or the pixe or canapie, wherin the same Sacrament is or shalbe, or vnlawfully, contẽptuously, or maliciously of their owne power and aucthoritie pull downe, deface, spoyle, or otherwyse breake any aulter or aulters, or any crucifixe, or crosse, that now or hereafter shalbe in any churche chappell, or churcheyarde. That then euery suche offender and offenders in anye the premisses his or their aydour, procuror, or abbettor, aydours, procurours, or abbettours, immediatlye and forthwith after anye of the sayde Acte or Actes, or other the sayde misdemeanours so committed, done, or made, or at anye time or times after, shalbe apprehended, arrested, and taken by anye Constable or Constables, Churchewardeyn, or churchewardeyns of the sayde paryshe, towne,

or place, where the sayde offence or offences shalbe so committed, made, or done, or by anye other officer or officers, or by anye other person or persons, then beinge present at the tyme of the sayde offence or offences so vnlawfully committed, made, or done. Whiche person or persons so apprehended, taken, or arrested with conueniente spede, shalbe broughte and caryed to anye Justice of peace within the sayd Shire, or within any Citie, Borowe, Libertie, or Towne corporate, wherin Justices of peace be, where the sayde offence or offences shalbe so committed, done, and made, and that the sayd Justice of peace, vpon due accusation, therupon had and made by the apprehendour, or apprehendours, or other person or persons of any of the sayde person or persons so offendynge, forthwith, shall committe the sayde person or persons, so apprehended, arrested, and taken, to saufekepyng and custodye, as by the discretion of the sayde Justice shalbe thought moost mete and conueniente, and that within. vj. dayes nexte and immediatlye after the sayde accusation so had and made to the sayde Justice, the sayde Justice with one other Justice of peace in the sayde Shire, Citie, Borowe, Libertie, or towne corporate, shall diligentlye examine the Acte or Actes, offence or offences aforesayde. And yf they the sayde two Justices of peace, shall vpon their sayde examination finde or perceaue the sayde person or persons so accused, giltie of any of the sayde offence or offences, wherof he or they shalbe so accused, and that by two sufficient wytnesses, or by his or their owne confession or confessions, That then and immediatlye with conueniente spede, the sayde two Justices shall committe and awarde the sayde person or persons so accused, as is aforesayd to the gayle of, or for the sayd shire, citie, borowe, libertie, or towne corporate, where the sayd offence or offences was so cõmitted, made, or done, there to remayne without bayle or maine price by the space of thre monethes, then nexte ensuing, and further to the next quarter sessions to be holden within the sayde shire, citie, borowe, libertie, or towne corporate, nexte after thende of the sayde thre monethes, at which sayd quarter sessions, the sayd person or persons, so committed to the gayle, as is aforesayde, vpon his or their reconciliation and repentaunce in that behalfe, before the sayde iustices of peace at the sayde sessions, shalbe deliuered and discharged out of prison and gayle vpon sufficient suertie of his good abearyng and behauoure, to be then & there taken by the sayd Justices for one hole yeare, then next ensuinge, as by the discretion or discretions of the sayde Justices then, and there beyng, or of the more part of them, shalbe thought mete and conueniente. And yf the sayde person or persons so in gayle, as is aforesayde, will not be reconciled and repente at the sayde quarter sessions, that then the sayde person or persons immediatlye in time conuenient, shalbe further awarded and committed to the sayde gayle, by the sayd Justices, or by the more part of them, there to remayne, without bayle or maynepryse, vntill he or they so committed and awarded to gayle, as is aforesayde, shalbe reconciled, and be penitente for hys or their sayde offence or offences.

And be it further enacted by the auctoritye aforesayde, that yf anye person or persons, at any time or times, after the sayde twentye daye of December, of their owne auctho̅ritye and power, willingly, and vnlawfully do reskewe anye offender or offenders so apprehended, taken, or arrested, as is aforesayde, or will disturbe, hynder, or lette the sayde offender or offenders, so offendyng, as is aforesayde, to be apprehended, taken, or arrested, that then euery one of the sayde reskewers or disturbours, shall suffer lyke imprisonmente, as is aforesayde, and further shall paye forfeyte, and lose for a fine, for euery of his or their sayde offences. x. li. to the Quenes Maiestie her heyres and successours.

And be it further enacted, by thauctoritie aforesayd, that yf any of the offenders aforesayd be not taken, apprehended, or arrested im̃ediatly in tyme conueniente, as is aforesayde, but do escape, or go awaye, that then the sayde escape shalbe lawfullye presented before the Justices of

peace in the sayde Shier, Citie, Borowe, Libertie, or Towne corporate, at the next quarter sessions to be holden, where the sayd escape was made and suffred, and that then thinhabitauntes of the parysshe, where the sayde escape was so suffred, shall forfeyte and lose to the Quenes Maiestie her heyres and successours, for euery suche escape. x. li. to be leuied and taken, as other lyke amerciamentes and fines before this time, hath, and bene leauied and taken vpon any village, hundred, or towne, for the escape of any murderer, or other felon, for not making pursuite vpon Hue, and crye accordynge to the estatute of Wynchester, and the estatute made and prouided in the thirde yeare of the worthy kyng Henry the seuenth.

And be it further enacted by thauthoritie aforesayde, that all and singuler the Justices of peace, Justices of assise, Justices of oyer and determiner, & all and singuler Maiours, Bayliffes, and Justices of peace, within anye Citie, Borowe, or Towne corporate, in any partes within this realme, within the limittes of their commission or commissions, shal haue full power and aucthoritie, by vertue of this Acte, after the sayd. xx. daye of December, to enquire of all and singuler the offences and misdemeanours aforesayd, and to heare and determine the same, aud to set the fines and amerciamentes of the sayd offender or offenders, as is afore sayd.

Prouided alwayes, and be it further enacted by thauctority aforesayd, that this Acte or anye thing therin conteyned, shal not in any wise extende to abrigate and take away thauctority, Jurisdiccion, power, and punyshmentes of the ecclesiasticall lawes, nowe standynge, and remayning in their force, of, or for the punishmente of anye the offences and misdemeanours afore sayde, but that thauctoritye, power, Jurisdiccions, and punishmentes of the sayde ecclesiastical lawes, of, & for anye of the offences and misdemeanours aforesayd, shal stande in ful power and strength, and to be vsed and exercised in all, and in euery thinges, as thoughe his Acte had neuer bene had and made. This present Acte or any thyng therin conteyned to the contrary hereof in any wyse notwithstandynge.

Prouided alwayes, and be it enacted, that whatsoeuer person offendyng in the premisses, shall for any of the offences afore recited, receaue punyshment of the ordinarye, hauyng a testimoniall therof, vnder the sayde ordinaries seale, shall not for the same offence, eftsones be conuicted before the Justice, and in likewyse receauynge for the sayde offences, punishment by the Justice, he shall not for the same offence eftsones receaue punishment of the ordinarye. Anye thynge in this Acte to the contrary notwithstandynge.

God saue the Quene.

Londini in ædibus Iohannis Cawodi

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Anno. M D. LIII.

Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum